

## **Press Advisory \* Press Advisory \* Press Advisory**

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(January 7, 2004- TROY)- Mayor Harry Tutunjian will join New York State Senator Charles Schumer Thursday afternoon to rally against a vote by the NCAA Division III membership that would force RPI to give up its Division I hockey status.

Tutunjian, Schumer, RPI head coach Dan Fridgen, and several hockey players will gather at the RPI Field House at 12:45 p.m on Thursday January 8 to voice their opposition to the move.

Under the proposal, the NCAA Division III Presidents' Committee would prevent Division III schools from offering scholarships to field Division I teams in one sport. The schools affected by the legislation are RPI, Clarkson, St. Lawrence, and Colorado College hockey, Johns Hopkins lacrosse, SUNY Oneonta men's soccer, Colorado College women's soccer, Hartwick water polo, and Rutgers-Newark men's volleyball.

The entire Division III membership, made up of 416 schools will vote on the proposal during the NCAA Convention in Nashville on January 12. If the vote is passed, beginning in 2008-2009, RPI would have to play its Division I hockey schedule without scholarships, field a Division III hockey team, or move all sports to Division I.

In 1985, RPI won the Division I National Championship and sat alone atop the college hockey world. Over the years, numerous players have gone on to have careers in the National Hockey League, most recently former RPI star and Troy native Matt Murley, who scored the first goal of his career earlier this year.

"If this Division III reform is approved, stories like that of Matt Murley or the 1985 National Champions will be that much harder to find," Tutunjian said. "It makes little sense to punish such a storied school with deep hockey blood lines. I remember watching the 1985 team when I was in high school. I remember the excitement it provided."

"Just this year, RPI proved its value to Division III by making it to the National Semi-finals in football," Tutunjian added. "That was a great experience and the community was behind them. However, nothing beats the Big Red Freakout. Nothing beats the enthusiasm the area has for the guys who skate every Friday and Saturday night. It would be a shame to destroy that."